



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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DLNR BEGINS FIRST PHASE OF NEW DIAMOND HEAD LINEAR PARK

Blessing of pathway launches beautification of park exterior, preserves public access

HONOLULU – The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) has begun work to create a new linear park around the mauka exterior slope of the Diamond Head State Monument that will consist of an accessible multi-use pathway, picnic and rest areas along its 1.3-mile length.

A blessing ceremony for the pathway was held today at the park led by Kahu Curt Kekuna and attended by Governor Neil Abercrombie, legislators, and representatives of the Hawaii Tourism Authority, Kapi‘olani Community College, Diamond Head Citizens’ Advisory Committee, and the state Department of Defense (which shares management and jurisdiction of Diamond Head State Monument).

Governor Abercrombie said: “Diamond Head, also known as Le‘ahi, is an iconic monument recognized and associated with Hawai‘i around the world. Each year, thousands of visitors arrive by foot, car, bus or trolley to see the volcanic crater and climb its historic summit trail, which offers panoramic views of Waikiki, O‘ahu’s southern coastline and the Ko‘olau and Wai‘anae mountains.

“Over the past 10 years, DLNR has invested in enhancements to this world-famous destination that balance stewardship of the valuable natural asset with maintaining access for kama‘aina and visitors.”

In addition to conducting rockfall mitigation projects for increased safety along the crater interior and exterior, DLNR has worked to improve the park inside the crater. This has included renovation of the parking lot; installation of a visitor kiosk with interpretive signage, completion

of a new comfort station, trail stabilization, the addition of tunnel and spiral staircase lighting, improvements to the summit viewing area, and a just-completed loop trail section that better directs the flow of more than 600,000 hikers every year.”

The commencement of work on the new Fort Ruger Pathway is the first element of the state’s Diamond Head State Monument Master Plan Update, which can now move forward with the help of more than \$1.3 million designated for the project by the state Legislature.

The pathway, which will be completed by November 2012, will provide residents and visitors an accessible multi-use path along the exterior slopes of the monument. Currently, there is no sidewalk along much of Diamond Head Road. At areas where a sidewalk exists, it consists of a narrow 3-4 foot-wide sidewalk for use by pedestrians, walking from Waikiki-area hotels to visit the park and its historic summit hike.

“We are pleased to be carrying out the long-awaited installation of the Diamond Head linear park on the slopes where Fort Ruger once stood,” said William J. Aila, Jr., DLNR Chairperson. “This day is made possible thanks to the support of Governor Abercrombie, the Legislature and community partners who helped us formulate the vision for Diamond Head that is laid out in the master plan. The pathway and surrounding areas will encompass 12 acres that will beautify the natural landscape and provide recreational opportunities for walkers and bicyclists. There will also be interpretive signs to share the history of the former Fort Ruger Military Reservation in this area.

“In the future, we are hopeful that we will be able to accomplish the other elements of the master plan that will help us better share this significant cultural, geological and historical site as a leading destination in Hawai‘i.”

With additional funding of \$700,000 from the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority, the DLNR Division of State Parks will later install irrigation and landscaping with appropriate native plant species.

Diamond Head State Monument encompasses more than 475 acres, including the interior and outer slopes of the crater. It receives approximately 600,000 visitors annually and ranks among one of the top visitor destinations.

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Photos available upon request.
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